

Article 6 Collaboration

A. Introduction

MCPS is committed to creating organizational structures and processes that solidify the collaborative relationship between MCPS and the unit members' representative organization, MCEA, to ensure the parties are able to continue to work together to do what is best for students.

We define collaboration as a process in which partners work together in a meaningful way and within a time frame that provides a real opportunity to shape results. The purpose of the process is to work together respectfully to resolve problems, address common issues, and identify opportunities for improvement. To be successful, the collaborative process must be taken seriously and valued by both parties. The process must be given the time, personal involvement, commitment, hard work, and dedication that are required to be successful. Collaborative, shared decision-making brings people together who then share responsibility for needed changes and accountability for results. The partners will identify and define issues of common concern, propose and evaluate solutions, and agree on recommendations. The collaborative process does not supersede the legally mandated obligations of the parties, such as the duty to bargain.

- B. ~~The Association's Board of Directors will meet with the superintendent at least once a month during the term of this agreement to review and discuss matters of mutual concern and administration of this Agreement.~~

Commented [BSN1]: MCPS 12/15/22: Duplicative of Art. 3(C).

C. Organizational Culture of Respect

The parties are committed to fostering an organizational culture of respect throughout the school system based on the principles set forth in Appendix B of this Agreement. This culture is built on the belief that all employees are essential for the school system to attain equity and excellence for all students. To accomplish this, there must be a systemwide commitment to foster this organizational culture of respect, and there must be accountability at all levels of the organization. The parties recognize that this collective bargaining relationship is essential to enhance this culture. The organizational culture of respect is based on the following principles:

- Trust in each other and the process
- Use of collaborative and interest-based processes
- Recognition of every employee's contributions
- High expectations for all staff and students that are reasonable, clear, and transparent
- Open, honest contributions without fear of retribution
- Open and effective communication
- Respect for various points of view
- Civility in all our interactions

- Team building and working together as teams

The parties will work together to ensure all employees understand that, in order to create this culture, all parties must take responsibility for their own behavior and follow these principles. Managers and supervisors must model this behavior, and all employees are expected to exhibit this behavior at all times.

One way to ensure this culture [of respect] exists throughout MCPS is through the full implementation of the Teacher Professional Growth System (PGS). “The goal of the PGS is to ensure that, through continuous improvement, all employees accomplish the duties and responsibilities of their jobs at a high level of performance and share accountability for the success of all students” (MCPS Board of Education policy GJA-RA). All employees are expected to provide and receive feedback constructively and respectfully. There will be a commitment to resolving issues and problems at the lowest level possible without applying blame.

- D. When MCPS has a plan to disseminate information to the broader Montgomery County community (e.g., parents, students, and/or other stakeholders), the information shall first be shared with MCPS employees. When it is impossible to share the information with staff before disseminating the information to the broader community, MCPS will share the communication with all staff immediately afterward, i.e. within twenty-four (24) hours.

E. Commitment to Equitable Practices in the Workplace

The Board of Education and the Association are committed to equitable practices for the achievement of all students. Our commitment to equitable practices and diversity is reflected in the school system’s core values and beliefs. In order to be successful, staff is expected to respect individual and group differences and diverse opinions, perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds to help MCPS attain the high expectations we have for all students.

It is our shared responsibility to assume that each student and adult has unlimited potential and the ability to achieve at high levels. Equitable practices require the commitment to high expectations for all students and employees and the provision of supports that build the capacity to meet the diversity of their needs. All employees are committed to cultural competence and positive relationships with all students, staff, parents, and community members, regardless of race, ethnicity, or background.

F. Collaboration among the Leadership of MCEA, Other MCPS Unions, and MCPS Leadership

1. The parties are committed to working collaboratively with representatives of the other employee organizations in a variety of structures and processes created to address the priorities of MCPS. They include the following:

- a) ~~Associations/Deputy Superintendents/Chief Operating Officer/Chief Academic Officer/ Chief of School Support and Well-Being~~ Chief of Operations (ADC)—A joint committee that provides for regular, ongoing discussions and decision-making on

matters germane to the employee organizations and management. The membership of ADC includes the president and executive director of each of the employee organizations, the deputy superintendent, the Deputy Superintendents/Chief Operating Officer/~~Chief Academic Officer/Chief of School Support and Well-Being~~[Chief of Operations](#). The agenda for ADC meetings shall be jointly developed by its members. Each member shall be permitted to add items to the agenda.

- Discussing matters of mutual interest or concern
- Identifying opportunities to address shared interests
- Developing guidelines and processes for implementing collaboration throughout the school system
- Creating an organizational expectation for collaboration
- Identifying supports and resources to sustain collaboration
- Serving as a coordinating body and resource to facilitate the use of collaboration throughout MCPS
- Reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of collaboration between MCPS and the associations
- Determining how to align the three professional growth systems
- Resolving problems arising from the interpretation or implementation of collaborative decisions
- Supporting the implementation of the Organizational Culture of Respect throughout the system
- Identifying how decisions that are made with other employee organizations will impact unit members and how all parties will be involved in these decisions so that the impact of any decision will be known before the decision is made
- Discussing decisions that impact the members of multiple associations
- Working together to identify opportunities and initiatives to improve the wellness of MCPS employees
- Arranging for online publication of Time Impact Statements

- b) **Operating Budget Review Committee**—A joint committee that reviews the operating budget requests from all offices and departments and makes recommendations for the MCPS operating budget to the superintendent. The membership of this committee will include the president and executive director of each of the employee organizations, the deputy superintendent, and the Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO).

- c) **Executive Leadership Team**—The membership of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will include the president and executive director of each of the employee organizations, the deputy superintendent, the OCOO, and other MCPS leadership. The charge of the ELT includes but is not limited to reviewing and updating the annual strategic plan, providing feedback on revisions to policies and regulations, setting systemwide targets, and reviewing data for the purposes of improvement, including current system research. Notes from all ELT meetings shall be jointly prepared and shared with both organizations.
2. There are other committees in which the leadership of MCEA, MCPS management, and other employee organizations will work together to address the priorities of MCPS. They include the following:
 - a) **Professional Growth System Implementation Teams and Peer Assistance and Review Panel**—The leadership of each of the employee organizations are invited to be a member of each of the three implementation teams. The Vice President of MCEA co-chairs the Teachers PGS Implementation Team and PAR Panel.
 - b) **Joint Employee Benefits Committee (JEBC)**. [More information regarding the JEBC can be found in Article 23\(I\).](#)
 - c) ~~**Staffing Allocation and Budget Review Committee**—Moving forward, MCPS, in partnership with MCEA (to include SEIU Local 500 and MCAAP), will perform a review of the courses, programs, facilities, staffing, and schools’ instructional budgets to identify potential disparities that may potentially limit the school’s instructional program. In consultation with the three (3) unions, MCPS will identify and implement possible programmatic and resource adjustments to address identified inequities to the fullest extent possible. Additionally, this review of staffing allocations and budgeted resources will be completed on a schedule such that the results be used to inform the subsequent operating budget process to more fully address resource allocation and funding needs.~~
 - d) ~~**Collaborative Management Coordinating Committee (CMCC)**—The parties are committed to working with the other unions to provide oversight for collaborative problem solving in MCPS. A multi stakeholder committee will support the ADC with this work. The vice presidents of the three employee organizations will co chair this committee. The job description of these three (3) vice presidents will include the work of the committee as part of their ongoing duties and responsibilities. The initial work will be to develop an action plan to address opportunities to improve the coordination and alignment of the collaborative problem solving initiatives in MCPS. This committee also will monitor the implementation of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program.~~
 3. ~~MCEA and the Board of Education also are committed to sustaining the relationships between the parties through the aforementioned committees that have been established in other parts of this agreement, such as the following:~~

- ~~a) Labor Management Collaboration Committee~~
- ~~b) Professional Growth System Implementation Team and Peer Assistance and Review Panel~~
- ~~c) Joint Employees Benefits Committee (JEBC)~~

4. **School Climate and Culture**

- a) The ADC shall be tasked with addressing concerns about schools and other work sites with climate issues. The ADC shall take appropriate steps to deescalate situations in schools or other work sites and collaborate with representatives of the other unions and the appropriate MCPS office to resolve issues quickly, at the lowest level possible. This may require providing resources and support to schools and work sites to help them address their climate issues. Upon notification by the MCEA president that existing structures intended to resolve climate issues are not successful at resolving a specific situation, MCEA and MCPS shall meet to create a specific plan to address and resolve that situation. This meeting shall take place within ten (10) business days of MCPS's receipt of the notification.
 - b) The parties agree to use annual surveys that provide important feedback to offices and schools.
 - c) The survey will be used jointly by all parties to identify successful practices and areas for improvement. These surveys should be considered important feedback.
 - d) There is an understanding from all parties that these surveys are important and an expectation that they should be completed by all staff. Time shall be provided during the workday for employees to complete surveys. The questions on these surveys shall be reviewed by all parties on a regular basis to be certain they are updated to reflect changes in MCPS.
 - e) Unit members will have web-based access to both summary data and specific item analysis for the Staff Survey of the School/Office Environment for their work site, provided there is a sufficient response rate to report out valid data.
5. ~~The Board is committed to the principle of employees having meaningful participation in decision making at all levels of our school system. To that end, the parties agree to the formation of a joint work group, including all three (3) MCPS employee unions and the administration, to determine ways in which such participation can best be achieved in non-school based departments and offices. The findings of the work group shall be reported back to the ADC committee for final consideration.~~

G. **Labor-Management Collaboration Committee**

- 1. The system-level Labor Management Collaboration Committee (LMCC) shall meet regularly to discuss and make decisions on matters germane to union-management relations and, when appropriate, to the continuous improvement of instruction and school system

operations. Each party shall identify four (4) to six (6) representatives, as permanent members of the committee. Members of relevant subcommittees will be invited to attend LMCC meetings when appropriate.

2. The overall charge to the systemwide LMCC shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a) Interpreting and administering the implementation of the negotiated Agreement
 - b) ~~Addressing Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) implementation matters that impact existing collective bargaining language and, more generally, working conditions not specified in the Agreement~~
 - c) Discussing any matters of mutual interest or concern and reaching tentative agreements on issues in a timely manner
 - d) Reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of collaboration between MCPS and MCEA
 - e) Delegating to the appropriate area-specific labor-management committee and/or collaborative body any matter of mutual concern to:
 - 1) Collect constituent feedback
 - 2) Make a report and recommendation to the LMCC that shall be adopted, rejected, or modified by the LMCC or remanded to the appropriate committee or body for further review.
 - f) Reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of all state and system-mandated assessments.
 - 1) ~~Based on the More Learning, Less Testing Act, which became effective June 1, 2017, and, upon ratification of the agreement, the LMCC shall begin creating a time impact statement for all assessments currently in use. The scope of school years to be included shall be determined by the LMCC.~~
 - 2) ~~The LMCC shall annually track and evaluate these real-time impacts and report the hours devoted to all aspects of mandated assessment administration to the staff from a representative, random sample of classrooms.~~
 - 3) ~~The Board and the Association agree to work together to reduce the amount of time diverted away from instruction.~~
3. Contract Waivers—Any school leadership team that desires to waive a portion or section of this collective bargaining agreement shall first meet with the MCEA president or their designee and the appropriate associate superintendent from the ~~Office of Teaching, Learning and Schools (OTLS)~~ [Office of School Support and Well-Being \(OSSWB\)](#) to discuss what the interest is in requesting such a waiver. Following this meeting, if the leadership team is still interested in pursuing a waiver, it is expected to follow an interest-based decision-making process to discuss the waiver request:

- The issue should first be clearly articulated
- The interests of the parties should be discussed
- Those interests that are shared should be identified
- The team should discuss different options and determine which options address the issue and meet the shared interests
- The team should determine if they can reach an agreement on one option, and, if they can, they should communicate this waiver request to the other unit members in the school and share their intent to submit the request to the LMCC.

The LMCC will ask representatives of the school leadership team to present their request at a LMCC meeting and describe why they believe it should be approved, the process that was followed, the interests that are being addressed, and the other options that were considered. The LMCC will deliberate following this presentation and may either ~~make a decision~~decide at the time or request additional information so that the decision can be made at the following LMCC meeting. The waiver will be reviewed annually by the LMCC. Waiver requests that involve contract waivers for more than just the MCEA bargaining unit will be referred to the ADC Committee for review and decision.

4. The LMCC shall have the following authorities:
 - a) To establish temporary joint committees to address particular issues. Such committees will report back to the LMCC. The LMCC shall be authorized to establish the membership, charge, and tasks of these committees, as well as discontinue the joint committees when their work is completed. The LMCC will review recommendations and implementation plans for final decisions.
 - b) To clarify language and meaning, correct contradictions or inconsistencies, and remove outdated language. Recommendations for such changes or corrections to the Agreement shall be subject to internal ratification and approval procedures of MCPS and MCEA.
 - c) To resolve problems arising out of the interpretation or implementation of collaborative agreements and decisions. Where resolution is not possible within the LMCC, the LMCC is authorized to involve a third-party facilitator or other ~~problem~~problem-solving process, to help the parties reach an agreement.
 - d) The committee will develop ground rules that will guide its deliberations.
5. The LMCC will consider the following collaborative venues, determined by the parties, to be of high priority. Thus, the LMCC will delegate issues to the following bodies for problem solving:
 - a) **Area-Specific Labor Management Committees**

- 1) Under the auspices of the MCEA Labor Management Collaboration Committee, area-specific labor-management committees shall meet on a monthly basis to develop and review regulations and practices related to their area of focus and be proactive in resolving issues of concern. These committees will include but are not limited to:
 - (i) Special Education Labor Management Committee
 - (ii) Student and Family Services and Engagement Labor Management Committee
 - (iii) Operations & Contract Administration Labor Management Committee
 - (iv) Curriculum & Instruction Labor Management Committee
- 2) Area-specific labor-management committees will make recommendations to the LMCC after reviewing the issue and seeking input.
- 3) Each party will appoint a co-chair and other representatives for each of the area-specific labor-management committees. MCPS appointed representatives will have decision-making authority.
- 4) After each labor-management committee forms, MCPS and MCEA appointed representatives will have an opportunity to participate in training jointly provided by MCEA and MCPS. The committee may request additional training, facilitation, and other forms of assistance from MCEA and MCPS. Such requests will be made to the LMCC, which will arrange for the requested support.
- 5) The area-specific labor-management committee(s) will establish a regular meeting schedule which they will submit to the LMCC by September 30 of each year.
- 6) Other Collaborative Structures
 - (i) Non-school-based staff: Non-school-based unit members shall be provided with the same access to collaborative and shared decision-making as their school-based colleagues. To accomplish this, the LMCC is responsible for creating and providing oversight to non-school-based collaboration committees. Non-School-Based Collaboration Committees are charged with holding ongoing discussions and engaging in collaborative problem solving on matters of interest and concern. Each collaboration committee is expected to be representative of and accountable to staff and involve staff in the decision-making process. These committees shall include, but are not limited to:
 1. English for Speakers of Other Language
 2. Montgomery County Infant and Toddlers Program
 3. Pupil Personnel Workers
 4. School Psychologists

(ii) The appropriate supervisor and the MCEA representative will work together to arrange a reasonable amount of time for the staff to select the members of the collaboration committee.

(iii) Workgroups may be used as an attempt to collaboratively resolve issues informally at the lowest level. Workgroups shall include but are not limited to:

1. ~~Quarterly Reports Workgroup~~
2. Material & Supply Selection Workgroup
3. Technology Workgroup
4. Early Childhood Education Workgroup

b) Councils on Teaching and Learning

1) The Councils on Teaching and Learning (CTL) continue to provide school-based unit members with an opportunity to discuss, collaborate with MCPS staff, and communicate about MCPS initiatives related to curriculum, assessment, instruction, and staff development. The representatives on the CTL will provide the perspective of teachers at each grade level and in each subject discipline.

2) They shall participate with MCPS representatives in collaborative ~~problem~~ problem-solving regarding matters germane to curriculum and staff development. MCPS representatives shall be available for at least one-half of the scheduled meetings with CTL representatives.

3) They will communicate regularly with their constituency groups for feedback, input, and suggestions on how to improve instruction through the use of curricular tools and professional development activities. The results of surveys administered by CTLs will be reviewed jointly by CTL leadership and MCPS staff before being distributed.

4) Any new systemwide assessments will be presented to and discussed with the CTL prior to any final decision on implementation.

5) CTL will make recommendations to the LMCC after reviewing the issue and seeking input.

c) Resource Teacher, Content Specialists, and Resource Counselor Meetings:

Resource teachers, content specialists, and resource counselors meet regularly with the leadership of their subject area to discuss matters of mutual concern. These meetings should focus on information about the strategic priorities of the school system and discussions about the expectations and targets for each school and the strategies that should be implemented to ensure that all schools and all groups of students in each school successfully meet these expectations. The agenda for these meetings shall be developed collaboratively and the meetings will be chaired by the

appropriate central services supervisor. These meetings should use collaborative ~~problem~~-problem-solving strategies to ensure that school-based leadership staff is engaged in critical decision making. School-based leadership may provide feedback to the subject/content leaders at these meetings, and there should be feedback loops to ensure that school-based leaders are informed about what happened with their input. The resource teacher/content specialist meetings also are an opportunity to provide training and support to resource these teacher leaders to build their leadership capacity.

6. ~~During the term of this agreement, the MCEA Labor Management Collaboration Committee LMCC will collaboratively determine each year consider the following collaborative projects determined by the parties to be of high priority: the focus areas for the LMCC and the ASLMCCs.~~

- ~~• Be Well 365 / Whole Child~~
- ~~• Community Schools~~
- ~~• Student Instructional Preparation / ES Planning Time~~
- ~~• ESOL~~
- ~~• Equitable Access Commitments~~
- ~~• Maryland Digital Learning Standards~~
- ~~• Required Assessments~~
- ~~• Special Programs Notification~~
- ~~• Student Information Systems Implementation~~
- ~~• Quarterly Reporting Expectations~~
- ~~• Joint Professional Learning Committee~~
- ~~• School Site Councils~~

- ~~a) The Labor Management Collaboration Committee will discuss systemic structures and processes that engage school based staff in decision making about the strategic direction and priorities of MCPS. This should begin with an authentic representation of school based staff in these processes. These processes will include how offices listen and learn from school based staff and gather feedback about new initiatives or changes in programs or curriculum. This feedback will be gathered at the local school level through focus groups, surveys, or other processes. There needs to be an opportunity for those who provided feedback to know what is being done with the feedback and what decisions have been made.~~

- ~~b) The parties agree to establish a committee to consider all of the issues and implications related to establishing online courses for students during the regular school day. This will include issues related to assignments and compensation.~~
- ~~e) The parties agree to examine and make recommendations as to how to best recruit and retain highly qualified teachers at high impact schools. The Board further agrees to commit money for the purpose of piloting the recommendations agreed to by the parties. If the parties cannot agree on recommendations for a pilot, MCEA and MCPS will meet to negotiate how the money could be used to support high impact schools.~~
- d) Workgroups shall be established to address:
 - 1) Salary scale redesign. [MCEA and MCPS agree to continue the work of the salary scale redesign workgroup begun during the 2021-2022 school year.](#)
 - 2) Stipends
 - ~~(i) MCEA and MCPS agree to convene a workgroup for one year to examine and propose policy and procedures governing the allocation of funds for extra-curricular activities. Each party shall appoint six (6) representatives. The committee's charges will include:~~
 - ~~1. Surveying all Fall, Spring, Winter, and year round stipend recipients to obtain information on actual hours spent conducting the requirements of sponsorship.~~
 - ~~2. Reviewing Class 3 stipend assignments by school.~~
 - ~~3. Recommending changes to current job descriptions and estimated hours required for each stipend activity.~~
 - ~~a. Particular attention should be paid to promoting equity in hours across each athletic and non-athletic activity.~~
 - ~~4. Identifying ways to increase the number of stipend opportunities at the elementary school level.~~
 - ~~5. The workgroup will report to MCPS and MCEA through the Operations & Contract ASLMC their recommendations by May 2021.~~
 - 3) Attracting and retaining staff at high impact schools
 - (i) MCPS and MCEA affirm that recruiting and retaining teachers at high impact schools is an important priority for the County. The parties will convene a work group to develop strategies for attracting and retaining teachers in high impact schools. Suggested areas of focus will include: hiring practices; enhanced compensation; community building structures and supports; new teacher supports; targeted professional development; benchmarking with other counties; hosting of professional development opportunities; using teachers as

assets in the recruitment process; exit interviews; and additional teacher, clerical, and in-class supports. The list of essential questions developed during the negotiations of this contract will serve as the starting point for the workgroup.

- (ii) ~~Enhanced compensation considerations should include adjusting steps over the hiring cap as needed to recognize total years of service for those committing to work at designated schools. For the FY2019-2020 period, MCPS identified approximately eighty five (85) highly impacted schools. We recommend that consideration be given to a rollout which would include twenty (20) highly impacted schools per year until all highly impacted schools until all highly impacted schools have been included. We recognize that budget constraints may limit the number of schools that can be included each year.~~

H. Fifty percent (50%) of all MCEA unit members on any MCPS determined/central office based committees or workgroups will be selected by MCEA elected leadership consistent with internal procedures.